

# WOMEN

## February LWer is a very 'good scout'

It all started with the Girl Scouts. When Leisure World's Erma Batman began a stint as a Scout leader in 1937, a long career of involvement with and service to youth was launched. When her first troop grew to Intermediate and Senior scouting status, Erma went along as their counselor.

The next step was assuming a position as camp chairman for the 52 troops of the Southeast St. Louis district. Erma later became day camp chairman for that district; in addition to her regular duties, she led the art program and directed pageants' drawing on the talent resources of the 52 troops.

Fellow residents have a chance now to find out what a "good scout" Erma is as she is honored as Leisure Worlder of the Month for February. A ceremony sponsored by Home Federal Savings and the

Leisure World Historical Society will be held at 10 a.m. Friday, Feb. 1, in Clubhouse 6. The public is invited.

Erma's career in scouting took place while she was attending college. In 1947 she began teaching kindergarten—but was, apparently, destined for more than one class at a time.

While working on her master's degree, she helped design a new program for the teaching of kindergarten in the state of Illinois, which had no mandatory kindergarten until the 1970s. Erma found that students who had attended kindergarten showed marked differences in ability from those who had not.

It became obvious, she said, that all students could benefit from pre-primary schooling and should have the opportunity to attend. As part of an experimental program, Erma

was placed in charge of an all-kindergarten school with more than 500 students.

In 1968, Erma was appointed primary coordinator for School District 68 in Illinois. It was the first year a kindergarten program had been offered in that district; today, Illinois has a mandatory kindergarten program—thanks at least in part to Erma Batman.

Her peers also gave recognition to Erma's work. She was awarded a life membership by the National Council of the Parent-Teacher Association in 1956. She was invited to join Delta Kappa Gamma, an international society for women educators, and became a charter member of the Beta Kappa chapter in 1959.

She also was appointed to the Dupage County, Ill., Kindergarten-

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**Erma Batman**

## ERMA: A career with children

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Primary Institute Committee in 1965, and served as the body's chairman in 1965.

Erma photographed, wrote and edited the manual "An American Kindergarten in Action," which has been used by parent groups, in colleges and at educational meetings.

In Leisure World, her credits in-

clude past presidencies of the Woman's Club, Retired Teachers, Illinois Club and Cat Club; past secretaryship of the United Methodist Women and program speaker for the group's 18 circles; and, currently, volunteer work at Saddleback Hospital and secretaryship of the Leisure World Chorale.